Clay Williams
Hunter College Library
Cellular 917-562-4807
clay.williams@hunter.cuny.edu
Office 212-772-4144
Office Hours by Appointment

INTRODUCTION:
This course focuses on the philosophy, process, and techniques of information services. It provides an overview of information access and delivery; types of resources and formats used in information services; evaluation and measurement of sources and services; and information seeking processes and behaviors.

OBJECTIVES:
At the end of the course, the student will be familiar with:

1. Reference services for various user communities
2. General reference sources
3. Basic reference sources in humanities, social sciences, and science and technology
4. Search techniques and strategies for electronic sources
5. General Internet searching within a reference framework

COURSE READING:
Required Text:

On Reserve at 1st floor reference desk of the Bobst Library when needed.
Ross, Catherine S., Nilsen, Radford, Conducting the Reference Interview. 2009

ASSIGNMENTS:
Due Dates are listed in the course schedule below. See separate “Assignments” pages for details of each.

Sources Exercises Nearly every class will focus on the use of a particular type of general reference resource. Students will complete an exercise that necessitates the use of materials of that type. Students will be required to turn in, in typed form, at least two of these Sources Exercises. We will start each class with these, when due. There will be recommended readings for various tools, resources, and reference philosophy.
**Reference Services Presentations** Each student will prepare and participate in a presentation on one of the topics listed on the Services Assignment sheet. Students must also complete a written element for this assignment. Students are required to work in small groups, but each student must show demonstrable evidence of their individual contribution.

* SLO III. d and e. Students will use a variety of technologies to deliver resources and services in accordance with legal, ethical and professional standards.

**Secret Shopper Assignment** For this assignment, students will visit a library, in person and virtually, thus experiencing as a patron the reference service offered there. Students will prepare a 3–5 page report on their experience, answering a series of questions about their chosen service site. Each student will give a brief oral outline of this in class. The question should be the same but the libraries may be different for the virtual and the in-person query.

* SLO V. a. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the importance of service to and advocacy on behalf of libraries and the profession; continuing professional development; and research in the field

**Project-Based Assignment** Students will imitate life without any of the concomitant baggage. In most workplaces, there is the opportunity to propose a new idea to one’s coworkers/boss in a memo format and then do a brief “pitch” to sell this idea. The inherent assumption is that one has only a brief memo and then about 5 minutes to sell the idea to others.

* SLO IV. b. Students will explain and apply management principles, processes, and practices including those relating to innovation and strategic planning as well as human resources, financial, and operational functions of a library or other type of information organization

**Research Guide Project** Students will complete a final project that will consist of an annotated bibliography of resources related to a topic of their choosing; an analysis of the coverage of their chosen topic; and a comparison of the coverage offered by standard reference resources and those freely available on the Web. This will be done on guest accounts available from Springshare’s LibGuides.

* SLO II c, d, and III. a. Students will search, retrieve and synthesize information from a variety of systems and sources; and evaluate information systems and technologies based on functionality, usability, cost, and quality; and be able to evaluate, select, create, and use information resources, services, and programs to meet the needs of diverse user groups, including underserved populations

**EVALUATION:**
Your final grade will be determined following these criteria:

- Class Participation/Attendance 15%
- Sources Exercises 25% (2 x 12.5%) (Discussions included)
- Secret Shopper 15%
- Services Presentation 15% (7.5% oral, 7.5% written)
- Project-Based Assignment 15%
- Research Guide/Project 15%
Late work
Because of the nature of the coursework in this class, all assignments are due on the date assigned. Failure to turn in assignments on due dates will result in a loss of one letter grade per day that it is late (not per class meeting). Without exception, sources exercises may not be turned in late. Speak to the instructor prior to the due date if you cannot for a legitimate reason meet a due date. You may be assigned an alternate assignment to make up for it. Exceptions for emergencies must be accompanied by evidence (i.e., doctor’s note).

Plagiarism and academic integrity
Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity, and will be treated as such. Any plagiarism will result in a grade of “F” on that assignment. Plagiarism on the final project will result in a grade of “F” for the entire course. There are no makeup assignments for those graded “F” due to plagiarism.
COURSE SCHEDULE:
This is the tentative schedule for the semester, be sure to familiarize yourself with the due dates for assignments. There might be a need for adjusting the schedule for various reasons, such as guest speakers, my own ramblings, or the sheer size of the class. There will doubtless be a need to add readings for the sake of discussion.

THURSDAY, 1/23 – Introduction(s)
Class:
- Introduction to the course
- Introduction to materials, assignments, and text
- Bobst Library orientation-as needed
- “Sign up” for services assignments

THURSDAY, 1/30 – History and Philosophy
Due:
- Sources Exercise: Guides to Reference Books/Reviews
Read:
- Bopp and Smith Chapter 1 History and Functions of Reference Services
- Bopp and Smith Chapter 13 Selection and Evaluation of Reference Sources
Class:
- Discussion of Source Exercise (This one is **not** to be turned in)
- Discussion of readings

THURSDAY, 2/6 – Doing the Work of Reference
Due:
- Sources Exercise: Bibliographies and Catalogs
Read:
- Bopp and Smith Chapter 20 Bibliographic Sources
- Bopp and Smith Chapter 4 Organization of Information and Search Strategies
- Bopp and Smith Chapter 11 Organizing and Delivering Reference and Information Services
- Ross, Nilson, Radford, Chapters 1 and 2.
- Mann Chapter 10 (Instructor will supply)
Class:
- Discussion of Source Exercise
- The Library Catalog(ue):
- Boolean Operation and searching as professionals

NO CLASS 2/13

THURSDAY, 2/20– The Reference Interaction
Due:
- Secret Shopper Assignment
- Sources Exercise: Indexes and Abstracts
LIS 511

Services Presentation #1: The Reference Interview
Read:
- Bopp and Smith Chapter 21 Indexes and abstracts
- Bopp and Smith Chapter 3 Interview
- Ross, Nilsen, Radford Chapters, 3 and 6.

Class:
- Discussion of Source Exercise
- Discussion of Presentation
- Discussion of Secret Shopper experiences
- Memo assignment: *Topics decision time*

THURSDAY, 2/27 – Changing Modes and Resources
Due:
Services Presentation #2: Reference in the Virtual World
Read:
- Bopp and Smith Chapters 5-6 Electronic Resources
- Ross, Nilsen, Radford, Chapter 5.

Class:
- Discussion of Source Exercise
- Discussion of Presentation
- Research Guide topics due (tentative)
- Guest Speaker – Hal Grossman

THURSDAY, 3/6 – Librarians have to agile
Due:
Services Presentation #6
Sources Exercise: Encyclopedias
Final Project topics-tentatively
Read:
- Bopp and Smith Chapter 18 Encyclopedias
- Bopp and Smith Chapter 7 Access Related Reference Services.


**Class:**
- Discussion of Sources Exercise
- Discussion of Presentation
LIS 511

THURSDAY, 3/20 – Issues and Ethics
Due:
☐ Sources Exercise: Directories and Biographical sources
☐ Services Presentation #4: Ethics of Reference Services
Read:
☐ Bopp and Smith Chapter 2 Ethics
☐ Bopp and Smith Chapter 14 Directories
☐ Bopp and Smith Chapter 16 Biographical
☐ Kay Mathiesen, (June 2004)“What is Information Ethics? ”ACM SIGCAS Computers and Society 34:1, 6
Familiarize yourself with some of these documents.
http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/statementspols/statementspolicies.cfm
Class:
☐ Discussion of Source Exercise #6
☐ Discussion of Presentation
Guest Speaker—Tony Doyle

THURSDAY, 3/27 - Teaching and Instruction
Due:
☐ Sources Exercise: Yearbooks, Almanacs, and Handbooks
☐ Services Presentation #3: Instruction and Information Literacy
Read:
☐ Bopp and Smith Chapter 15 Almanacs
☐ Bopp and Smith Chapter 8 Instruction
☐ Janes, Chapter 6
Class:
☐ Discussion of Source Exercise
☐ Discussion of Presentation

THURSDAY, 4/3 – Access and Outreach
Due:
☐ Sources Exercise: Dictionaries and Geographical Sources
☐ Services Presentation #5: Evaluation of Reference Services
Read:
☐ Bopp and Smith Chapter 17 Dictionaries
☐ Bopp and Smith Chapter 19 Geographical
☐ Bopp and Smith Chapter 12 Specific Populations
☐ Janes, Chapter 7
☐ Mann, Chapter 1
Class:
☐ Discussion of Source Exercise
THURSDAY, 4/10- Quality and Assessment
Due:
☐ Sources Exercise #8: Government Information and Statistics
Read:
☐ Bopp and Smith Chapter 10 Evaluation of Services
☐ Bopp and Smith Chapter 22 Government documents
Class:
☐ Discussion of Source Exercise
☐ Discussion of Presentation
Guest Speaker- Celebrated Government Documents Librarian Jane Cramer

THURSDAY, 4/17– Still Teaching? Those who can, do.
Due:
☐ Memo for Project-Based Assignment
☐ Presentations of Project-Based Assignment
Read:
Class:
☐ Presentations

THURSDAY, 4/24– Management of Reference
Due:
☐ Presentations of Project-Based Assignment continued
Read:
http://www.alan.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/events/pdf/neal2-05.pdf
☐ Review Bopp and Smith Chapter 11 Organizing, delivering and managing Reference Services
Class:
☐ Presentations

THURSDAY, 5/1 – Future of Reference
Due:
☐ Finish presentations
☐ Copy of the Research Guide –if you email it please be sure I have received a copy formatted the way you want me to see it
Read:
☐ Bopp and Smith Chapter 9 Reference Service Improvement:
Class:
LIS 511

- Discussion of Presentations
- Course Evaluations